



**STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY**

Mailing address - documentation only
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3183
Phone: (512) 834-6627
Fax: (512) 834-6786
E-mail: speech@tdh.state.tx.us

Physical Address
Mail not delivered to this address
8407 Wall Street, S-420
Austin, Texas 78754
<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/plc/speech.htm>

Mailing address - documentation
accompanied by a fee (include budget
and fund as noted above)
P.O. Box 12197
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711-2197

**POSITION STATEMENT FOR SUPERVISING
LICENSED ASSISTANTS IN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance related to the use of speech-language pathology assistants in the delivery of speech-language services.

The Act and the Board Rules allow speech-language pathology assistants to assist in the delivery of speech-language services and to augment program and treatment activities under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist. Although the speech-language pathologist may delegate specific tasks to the assistant, the legal and ethical responsibility for all services remains with the supervising speech-language pathologist at all times. Speech-language pathology assistants cannot be assigned to or be responsible for their own caseloads. The purpose of the speech-language pathology assistant is not to increase caseload size, but to manage existing caseloads.

REFERENCES:

The Act: Texas Occupations Code (TOC), Chapter 401, §401.312
Board Rules: 22 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 741
Subchapter D, §741.41(i)-(k) relating to the Code of Ethics
Subchapter E, §741.65 relating to Requirements for an Assistant in Speech-Language Pathology License

(NOTE: Failure to follow the requirements of the Act and Board Rules shall result in disciplinary action being proposed by the Board against both the supervising speech-language pathologist and the assistant.)

RESPECTIVE DUTIES OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST AND ASSISTANT:

Provided that the training, supervision, documentation, and planning are appropriate, the following tasks may be delegated to a speech-language pathology assistant: implementing treatment programs designed by the supervising speech-language pathologist; providing carry-over activities; collecting data and documenting performance; maintaining clinical records; preparing clinical materials; and administering routine tests, but not interpreting results or determining severity. The licensed assistant shall abide by the decisions made by the supervisor relating to the assistant's scope of practice. In the event the supervisor requests that the assistant violate Board Rules, the Texas Occupations Code, or any other law, the assistant shall refuse to do so and immediately notify the Board office and any other appropriate authority.

To file a consumer complaint 1-800-942-5540
P.O. Box 141369 Austin, Texas 78714-1369
An Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

The licensed speech-language pathologist must conduct evaluations, interpret test results, determine case selection, design treatment programs, provide written or oral reports (e.g., progress notes, diagnostic reports) regarding patient/client status, make referrals, and participate in interdisciplinary team meetings (e.g., ARD's, IFSP conferences, discharge staffings) for all patients/clients being served in the entire caseload.

PROVIDING ADEQUATE SUPERVISION:

To ensure quality service, the speech-language pathologist must be provided adequate time for all aspects of managing the caseload. Because of the time required for training and supervising speech-language pathology assistants, it will be necessary to reduce the number of patients/clients directly served by the licensed speech-language pathologist in relation to the number of assistants being supervised. Variables that affect the maximum number of individuals who can be supervised appropriately by the licensed speech-language pathologist, may include but are not limited to:

- a. the number of hours per week the speech-language pathologist and assistant(s) are employed;
- b. specific tasks assigned to assistants (e.g., number, severity, and types of cases for whom they are implementing treatment plans);
- c. time required of the supervising speech-language pathologist in direct service provision;
- d. the experience level of the supervisor and assistant(s);
- e. the time limits imposed by supervision requirements (**minimum two hours per week**) ;
- f. the number of locations in which services are provided and travel time between locations; and
- g. other roles and responsibilities assigned to the speech-language pathologist (e.g., supervising interns, attending staff meetings, and fulfilling other campus and district assignments).

The speech-language pathologist should be the *only* professional to decide how many, if any, speech-language pathology assistants he/she can supervise and still ensure that all services are provided in compliance with Board Rules and the Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 401. If services are not provided in accordance with these rules, and a complaint is filed, the speech-language pathologist may be subject to disciplinary action.

In the event the supervisor ceases supervision of the assistant, the assistant must stop practicing immediately. The supervisor shall be responsible for the practice of the assistant until the supervisor notifies the Board of this change.

AMOUNT OF SUPERVISION REQUIRED:

The supervising speech-language pathologist must supervise the assistant two hours per week, whether the assistant works full or part-time. At least one-half of the minimum supervision requirements (i.e., one hour per week) must be met through face-to-face observation, at the location where the assistant is employed; the other half can be accomplished through audio/videotaping, telephone communication, or other means of reporting.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED:

The supervising speech-language pathologist must maintain documentation of regularly scheduled observation and evaluation of the assistant's performance. These records of supervision, and a job description for the assistant, must be provided to the board upon request.

SUMMARY: MAJOR POINTS

- Speech-language pathology assistants do not have their own caseloads; they assist the licensed speech-language pathologist in managing an existing caseload by implementing documented treatment plans. (Also see Board Position Statement, “Position Statement for Caseload Size in the Schools”. Board Position Statements and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the Board's homepage at:
www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/plc/speech.htm)
- Speech-language pathology assistants may administer routine tests (if the supervising speech-language pathologist has determined that the assistant has the training, experience, and competence), but they may not interpret results, determine severity, or make case selection decisions. The licensed speech-language pathologist is responsible for ensuring that test administration follows the publisher's instructions (e.g., determining whether the examiner is required to have a graduate degree).
- The supervising speech-language pathologist shall conduct diagnostic contacts with the patient/client, which may include evaluation.
- Speech-language pathology assistants may not attend any interdisciplinary team meetings (e.g., ARD's, IFSP conferences, discharge staffings) without the physical presence of the supervising speech-language pathologist. Assistants who attend ARD meetings may sign the IEP as “in attendance” but shall not check the “agree/disagree” column.
- Speech-language pathology assistants must be supervised two hours per week, regardless of the number of hours they are employed. At least one hour of supervision per week must be face-to-face, in the location where the assistant works. The licensed speech-language pathologist must maintain supervision and performance records that may be requested by the board.
- Speech-language pathology assistants should not use “SLP-A” as an indicator of their credentials. They may use “Assistant SLP” or “SLP Assistant” if they need to shorten the title.
- Before allowing an assistant to practice, the speech-language pathologist must verify the assistant holds a valid license and the speech-language pathologist has been approved to supervise the assistant.

While speech-language pathology assistants provide carry-over activities and prepare clinical materials, these tasks may also be performed by other personnel. For example, a classroom aide might provide models for language targets during class activities, prepare picture cards for a communication system, or program a communication device. However, these activities are not considered “speech-language therapy” and do not count toward the speech-language services specified in a student's IEP.

